

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BANGKO 20739 240122Z
ACTION EA-12

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EO 11652: NA

TAGS: SHUM, TH

SUBJ: THAMMASAT 18 TRIAL

REF: BANGKOK 13064

1. BANGKOK NEWSPAPERS REPORTED JULY 19 THAT THE TRIAL OF THE THAMMASAT 18 DEFENDANTS WILL COMMENCE TWICE WEEKLY SESSIONS ON WEDNESDAY AND THURSDAY OF EACH WEEK, BEGINNING IN OCTOBER. PRESENTLY, THE COURT MEETS ONCE A WEEK ON THURSDAY. IT WAS REPORTED THAT THE COURT ORDERED THE INCREASED SESSIONS IN RESPONSE TO A DEFENSE MOTION TO SPEED UP THE TRIAL.

2. THONGBAI THONGBAO, HEAD OF THE TEAM OF LAWYERS FOR THE DEFENDANTS, TOLD THE EMBASSY THAT, ALTHOUGH THE DEFENSE DID REQUEST A SPEED-UP OF THE TRIAL, THE COURT'S PROPOSED SCHEDULE IS NOT WHAT THEY REQUESTED. HE EXPLAINED THAT MANY MEMBERS OF THE DEFENSE TEAM ARE ALSO INVOLVED IN ANOTHER TRIAL WITH SESSIONS ALREADY SCHEDULED ON WEDNESDAY OF EACH WEEK AND THEREFORE ARE UNAVAILABLE FOR THE THAMMASAT TRIAL ON THAT DAY. THONGBAI INDICATED HE WOULD ASK THE COURT TO CHANGE THE DAY OF THE WEEK FOR THE PROPOSED SECOND SESSION. THE DEFENSE PREFERS SATURDAY

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SESSIONS BUT WOULD ACCEPT MONDAY OR FRIDAY AS WELL.

3. THE DEFENSE TEAM WILL ATTEMPT TO CHANGE THE SECOND WEEKLY SESSION FROM WEDNESDAY AND NO DOUBT FEELS THE PROSECUTION DELIBERATELY CHOSE THE MOST INCONVENIENT DAY FOR MEMBERS OF THE DEFENSE TEAM. HOWEVER, MANUT BUNNAG, NOTED HUMAN RIGHTS LEADER, SEEMED RELAXED OVER THE MATTER

IN A RECENT CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF AND INDICATED THAT
SOME ACCEPTABLE ACCOMMODATION COULD BE REACHED.
O'DONOHUE

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